

REMARKS

All claims 1-5, 8, 9, and 11-23 stand rejected in the April 2, 2008 Final Office Action as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,157,538 (Ali). Based on the amendments made herein and the reasons stated below, Applicant respectfully submits that all pending claims are in condition for immediate allowance.

Independent claims 1, 14 and 23 are directed to power semiconductor modules having semiconductor components arranged on substrate regions. One or more connecting elements directly contact adjacent ones of the substrate regions. Each independent claim is amended herein to recite that the connecting elements are formed by **recesses in a module housing** enclosing said substrate regions. Moreover, each recess must **extend from an exterior of the housing**. Ali fails to teach or suggest both of these newly added independent claim features.

The Patent Office argues that Ali's socket (20) is formed by recesses in module housing (11). See rejection of claim 2, on p. 2 of the Final Office Action. Applicant respectfully disagrees. Figure 4 in Ali is reproduced immediately below for ease of reference and clearly shows that the socket (20) is arranged on a lower plate (66) which in turn is arranged on the bottom of the housing (11). Thus, Ali's socket (20) is not formed by a recess in Ali's module housing (11). Instead, the socket (20) is spaced apart from the housing (11) by the lower plate (66). For this reason alone, all claims are patentable over Ali.

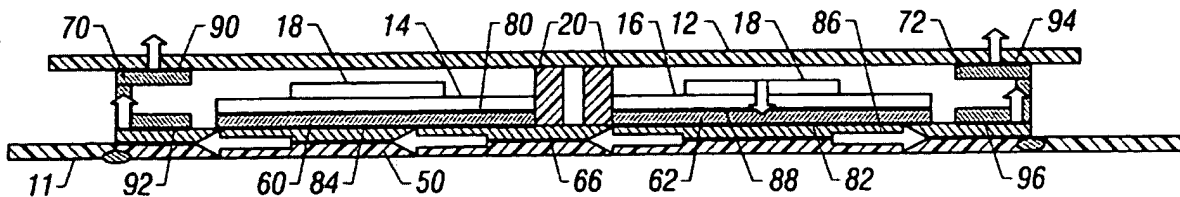


FIG. 4

Moreover, Figure 4 in Ali shows that the socket (20) does not extend from an exterior of the housing as recited in the newly amended independent claims. To the contrary, Figure 4

shows that the socket (20) is fully contained within the housing (11). Particularly, the socket (20) extends from an inner surface of the top of the housing downward to the lower plate (66) which is seated on the bottom of the housing (11). Immediately below is an exploded view of Figure 4 from Ali showing the socket portion of Ali's housing (11). The exploded view is annotated with two red boxes showing that the socket (20) does not extend past the inner surface of the top of the housing (11), nor does it even extend to the bottom of the housing (11). Instead, the socket (11) is spaced apart from the housing bottom by the lower plate (66). For this additional reason, all claims are patentable over Ali.

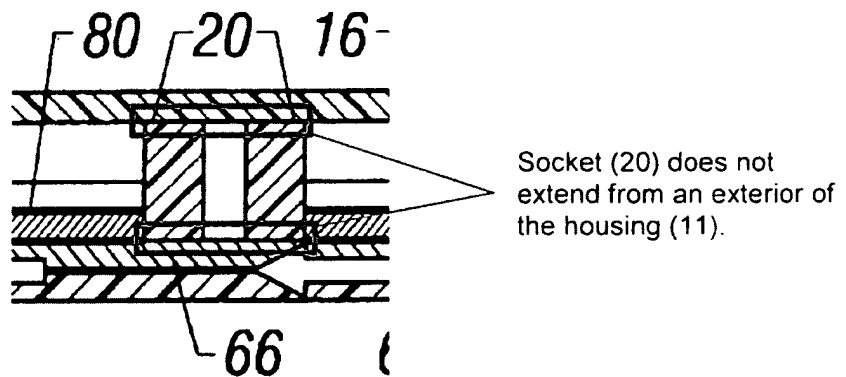


FIG. 4

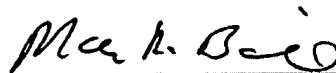
New independent claim 24 is directed to a power semiconductor module having a substrate segmented into a plurality of spaced apart substrate regions and at least one semiconductor component arranged on one or more of the substrate regions. A connecting region is arranged in the space between adjacent ones of the substrate regions. The connecting region forms an articulated hinge with each of the adjacent substrate regions so that the adjacent substrate regions can move relative to one another about the articulated hinges. Ali fails to teach or suggest this limitation. Ali's socket (20) does not form an articulated hinge

nor does it allow movement of the thermally conductive plates (60, 62) relative to one another about the socket (20). Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that new claim 24 is patentable over Ali.

Applicant has made an earnest effort to place this case in condition for allowance in light of the amendments and remarks set forth above. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the pending claims. If there are any matters concerning this Application that may be cleared up in a telephone conversation, please contact Applicant's attorney, Mark R. Bilak at 919.854.1844.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: June 30, 2008

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